



future for  
religious heritage

# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

FRH the European network of historic places of worship



# Content

Summary	3
Administrative Report	4
Legal structure	4
Aims	4
Membership	4
Internal rules	4
Council	4
Committee and project structure	5
Membership	5
Office	5
FRH's Principles	6
International Conference	7
“Sustaining Europe’s Rural Religious Heritage”	7
Communication	9
Website and newsletter	9
Press coverage	9
Projects	12
Alterheritage	12
Religiana	13
FRHInformed	14
Europetour	14
Emergence and Transmission of European Cultural Heritage and Europeanisation	14
Income and Expenditure	15

## Summary

A majority of Europe's 500.000 religious heritage buildings are in rural areas and often present the most striking visual element in the landscape or village. Yet while the isolated church tower may be picturesque, it is also vulnerable. Urban sites lend themselves to regeneration, but rural heritage suffers from inaccessibility and depopulation.

FRH, set up in 2011, is the European network of organisations working to protect historic places of worship in Europe, a non-religious, not-for-profit organisation open to all peoples and religions.

FRH devoted its 2014 **international conference in Halle (Germany)**, therefore, to "Sustaining Europe's rural religious heritage". More than a hundred delegates from over twenty different countries concluded that religious heritage strengthens rural communities by providing the economic stimuli and local hubs vital to 21st century civil society.

Public support for this conclusion was manifested in a **European poll**, commissioned by FRH and carried out by SocioVision and Toluna in April 2014, of 6,000 individuals in eight countries, which showed that 79% of Europeans believe that religious heritage buildings play a crucial part in the future survival of their communities. Four out of five support action to save these buildings.

One of FRH's aims is to encourage the EU Commission to adopt an integrated approach to Europe's religious patrimony. To achieve this FRH is working to build its relationships with both the Commission and with MEPs. In 2014, FRH hosted an **event in the European Parliament** upon the invitation of MEP Peter Van Dalen, continued the seminar series of the EU-funded ALTERheritage

project, and participated at conferences in Athens, Turin, Elche and Uppsala.

FRH is developing a social platform for religious heritage: **Religiana**. This multilingual site sets out to provide a pan-European database of historic places of worship, together with basic information about architectural value and contents, opening times, and details of events. It facilitates online donations, including fiscal benefits. It is a tool for community-building, promoting religious tourism and, longer-term, obtaining the underlying facts to make a convincing 'Case for European Churches'.

FRH would also like to make a study of the management and funding of religious heritage to obtain a better appreciation of the likely evolution of the sector. Following its unsuccessful application under Creative Europe, FRH is investigating setting up of a joint-venture with a business school. If it can obtain the funding, FRH would also like to prepare a study of the role played by religious heritage for the European identity.

The FRH is expanding its reach using the more traditional media channels. In 2014, it grew by 20% in Newsletter subscribers, 40% in Twitter followers, and 16% in membership, now covering 33 countries. FRH was also featured in the International New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

Finally, to focus its efforts on fundraising, in 2014 FRH launched the Friends of FRH in association with La Fondation Roi Baudoin.

FRH looks forward to 2015 with energy and enthusiasm.





# Administrative Report

## Legal identity

FRH was registered as an ASBL (Association Sans But Lucratif) in Belgium on 29 September 2011. No. 839745430.

## Aims

The aims of the Association are to promote, encourage and support the safeguard, maintenance, conservation, restoration, accessibility and the embellishment of places of worship, their contents and their history. FRH is independent of churches and governments and is not faith based.

## Internal rules

The Internal Rules of the Association are set by the Council. They are a complement to the Statutes and, in the case of contradiction, the Statutes prevail. The Statutes and an up to date version of the Internal Rules are posted at all times on the website. Members, both Full and Associate, accept these Rules by subscribing to the Association. Staff accept them by signing working, internship or volunteering contracts.

## Council

The Council is responsible for the governance of the FRH.

- President **Olivier de Rohan**, French, Chairman of the Sauvegarde de l'Art Français
- Secretary **Lilian Grootswagers**, Dutch, representative of the Task Force Toekomst Kerkgebouwen
- Treasurer **Michael Hoare**, English, former Chair of the National Churches Trust
- Members **Giannalia Cogliandro Beyens**, Italian, Secretary General of ENCATC  
**Thomas Coomans de Brachène**, Belgian, professor at the K.U. Leuven, representative of the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation  
**Sarah de Lencquesaing**, American, Council member of French American Foundation & French Heritage Society  
**Crispin Truman**, English, Chief Executive Officer of the Churches Conservation Trust



## Committee and project structure

FRH has six permanent committees each chaired by a member of Council (Governance & Nominations, Development, Networking, Forecasting, Finance, Operations) and one ad hoc committee on Strategy. Projects are each governed by an independent committee chaired by a member of Council. A separate income and expenditure account is prepared for each project. Details of the remit and composition of each are available on the website.

## Membership

FRH currently has 42 Full members and 62 Associate members in 33 countries. Details of membership fees are available on the FRH website.

Members are encouraged to play an active role in the life of the Association by:

- Working on FRH committees and projects
- Attending events and conferences
- Providing articles for the monthly newsletter
- Exchanging information with others

## Office

In April 2014 a part-time communication and office assistant was recruited, bringing the team up to 1.5 fte, and a bigger office obtained within the ELO building. FRH continues to use a consultant for project development and funding applications and also welcomes volunteers either to help with specific projects and events or to help in the office.

Staff Members:

**Leena Seim** - Executive Officer

**Bregje Hofstede** - Communications and Administration Assistant

Potential candidates for both paid and unpaid work should consult the website.

## FRH's Principles

Europe's sacred heritage - architectural, movable and intangible - is central to its cultural and aesthetic roots. In a constantly evolving society, churches are unique repositories of art and history, resource for sustainable development and quality of life and tools for urban regeneration. Religious heritage deserves a better place on local, national and European political agendas.

Greater efforts should be made to maintain public understanding of religious heritage and to transmit this interest to future generations.

- Religious heritage should be shared, welcoming and open to the public.
- Extending use beyond worship attracts the non church-going public and contributes economically to the costs of upkeep.
- 'Church tourism' should be encouraged.
- Visitors should be incited to contribute financially.

- Buildings should be properly maintained and managed.
- Volunteer groups and non-traditional funding sources should be encouraged.
- Artefacts should, where possible, be maintained in situ.
- Good artefact inventories are essential.

Closure should only take place following:

- Full consultation with all stakeholders: Churches, congregations, Historic Buildings Commissions, heritage and community associations and the public.
- Proper study of alternatives such as gifting to congregations, use by other Churches, extending use beyond that of worship.





## Friends of FRH

The Friends of FRH have been set up by la Fondation Roi Baudoin with the aim to:

- Promote a better understanding of the sector's needs and FRH's principles
- Help FRH to lobby EEC institutions
- Promote FRH as the European federator of like minded organisations
- Provide a source of volunteer support
- Lead FRH to major donors

Roseline de Carmoy and Philippe le Hodey have agreed to sponsor the Friends' group.

### **Friends' bank account**

IBAN BE10 0000 0000 0404

BIC BPOTBEB1; reference \*\*\*014/1360/00057\*\*\*

Donors will receive a certificate of deductibility for Belgian tax. Please contact FRH for tax certificates in other fiscal jurisdictions.

# International Conference

## ”Sustaining Europe’s Rural Religious Heritage”

This event, organised by FRH in cooperation with Förderkreis Alte Kirchen Marburg and Berlin Brandenburg, was held on 29 October - 1 November 2014 in Halle (Saale). It attracted 102 delegates from 21 countries and also hosted FRH’s third Annual General Meeting.

The themes of previous conferences have been:  
2010 – Canterbury – creation of FRH  
2012 – Venice – Extended use of religious buildings  
2013 – Utrecht – Moveable religious heritage

FRH is most grateful for the generous financial and in-kind contributions from:

- The Headley Trust
- Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz
- Federal state of Sachsen-Anhalt
- Katolische Akademie des Bistums Magdeburg
- Landesheimatbund Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.
- Verband der Kirchbauvereine Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.
- Entschossene Kirchen, Stiftung zur Erhaltung der Dorfkirchen im Kirchenkreis Zerbst
- Erfgoed.nu

FRH is particularly grateful to Lilian Grootswagers for her role in the organisation of this conference.

There was good overall satisfaction with the conference, with an average score of 4.1 out of 5 and delegate feedback showed that the main motivation was networking and professional capacity building. Most people learnt about the conference through the newsletter or via personal contacts.

Keynote speeches were made by Christina Gutierrez-Cortinez (former MEP with the People’s Party and former Minister of Culture of Murcia), Sir Stephen Bubb (secretary general of Euclid, the European Civil Society Movement, and CEO at ACEVO) and Pier Luigi Sacco (Professor of Cultural Economics in Milan and director of the Fundraising School in Bologna). Speakers Kim de Wildt, Rosie Lister and Sonia Hahn made particularly good impressions as did the letter of support received from Monika Grütters (German minister of Culture and Media).

Religiana was presented for the first time to delegates.

A full report on the conference is available on the website.





# CALL FOR PAPERS

## AUFRUF FÜR BEITRÄGE

FRH Konferenz in Halle, Deutschland

29. Oktober – 1. November 2014

### Die nachhaltige Entwicklung sakraler Bauten im ländlichen Kontext (Sustaining Rural Religious Heritage)

SCHLUSSTERMIN 22. Juni  
[www.frh-europe.org/halle](http://www.frh-europe.org/halle)



Supported by:

THE  
**HEADLEY**  
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DEUTSCHE STIFTUNG  
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Katholische Akademie  
des Bistums Magdeburg



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# Communication

## Website and newsletters

The website has been steadily enhanced and complemented by the monthly newsletter which is now circulated to 741 subscribers. The newsletter includes news items from all over Europe, and also a Featured Article from one of our members presenting the situation in their country or a specific project they are working on. The collection of Featured Articles was started in 2011 and now contains 36 case-studies, available on the website. The FRH has also 496 followers on Twitter and 193 likes on Facebook.

## Press coverage

- International New York Times, Celestine Bohlen, 3 June 2014
- Reformatorisch Dagblad, the Netherlands, November 2014
- National Radio, Poland, November 2014
- Magazine for European cultural affairs in the UK, December 2014
- De Erfgoedstem (digital heritage magazine in the Netherlands), December 2014
- Preparations and interviews were also made for an article that was published in the Wall Street Journal on 3 Jan 2015

FRH sets out to convince:

- MEPs
- The EU Commission
- The relevant civil servants
- European NGOs active in the sector

that:

- Religious heritage represents, and by far, the largest single category of European patrimony
- This patrimony is under serious threat
- Europeans remain highly attached to their churches and other religious buildings
- An active, integrated, approach is essential to preserve this heritage for future generations
- As a complement to those engaged in social outreach, volunteer groups dedicated to the future of their church building, its contents and its history should be given every encouragement
- Extending the use of religious buildings for concerts and other events should be encouraged
- Church tourism – which already draws large numbers of visitors, needs to be structured and promoted
- Funding sources needed to be widened with suitable fiscal treatment for donors
- Churches should only be closed after proper consultation with all stakeholders

## An afterlife for places of worship



**Celestine Bohlen**

### LETTER FROM EUROPE

**BRUSSELS** When a church closes its doors, it is a sad day for its parishioners. When it is slated for demolition, it is a sad day for the larger community, as Lilian Grootswagers realized in 2005 when she and her neighbors in the small Dutch village of Kaatsheuvel learned that St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church was due to be torn down and replaced by a four-story apartment block.

Leaping into action, Ms. Grootswagers started a petition drive, collecting 3,250 signatures, almost one-quarter of the village's population, and sought help on a national level. As it turned out, St. Jozzelskerk, built in 1533 as the centerpiece of an unusual architectural ensemble, was eligible to be on a register of historic buildings.

Today, nine years after it held its last Mass, the church is still standing, empty but awaiting its next incarnation. Its rescue was a victory for a widening effort across Europe to preserve religious buildings in the face of rapid secularization and dwindling public resources.

Begun as a grass-roots movement in 2009, the Future for Religious Heritage took shape in 2011 as a network of groups from more than 30 countries, dedicated to finding ways to keep churches, synagogues and other religious buildings open, if not for services, then for other uses.

But making the transition from places of worship to some other purpose is a tricky one, which necessarily involves not only community support, but also managerial skills. "You can only manage a building if it has in-

come," said Leena Seim, executive officer of the Future for Religious Heritage, which has an office in Brussels.

Perhaps nowhere is the plight of churches more stark than in the Netherlands,

where about 1,000 Catholic churches — about two-thirds of the country's total — are due to be shut down by 2025, a reorganization forced by a steady drop in attendance, baptisms and weddings. Those were the figures given by Cardinal Willem Eijk, archbishop of Utrecht, in a report delivered to Pope Francis last December.

This trend is building up to an "immense tsunami," said Ms. Grootswagers, council secretary for the Future for Religious Heritage. "Every day, there is a story in the papers about another church closing. Before, it was kept quiet. Now they are saying it in the open."

From Italy to Estonia, communities are scrambling to find ways to save oft-beloved buildings from destruction, neglect, and in some cases the ravages of mass tourism. The status of religious buildings varies widely. In France, churches built before 1905 mostly belong to the municipalities. In Britain, most belong to the Church of England.

In every country, and every case, there are intricate tax implications, legal issues and questions about the appropriate use of a formerly sacred place. Deconsecrated churches have been turned into health centers, libraries, museums, restaurants and even a roller skating rink. These outcomes can be controversial.

The key is an open debate, Ms. Seim said, adding, "It is most important to involve stakeholders at an early stage." But it is not easy for communities to thrash through these issues on their own, which is why the Future for Religious Heritage has collected and shared ideas, experience and expertise across its network.

A recent poll backs up the view that religious buildings are widely cherished as part of Europe's cultural heritage. According to the poll, conducted by Sociovision among 5,000 citizens of eight European countries, four out of five consider the religious buildings in their midst to be "crucial" for the future of their communities, and three out of four favor opening them to non-religious activities if that would keep them open.

Armed with these findings, preservationists are pressing for aid from the European Union.

"We have to convince people that churches are not just for believers," Olivier de Rohan-Chabot, president of the Future for Religious Heritage, said in an interview in Paris. "Suddenly, we have realized that this is a problem that concerns our civilization."

EMAIL: pagetwo@nytimes.com



During 2014 FRH commissioned a poll of 6,000 Europeans in eight countries. This poll, conducted by SocioVision, showed that:

- 84% of Europeans think that churches and religious buildings are part of their cultural heritage
- 79% think that preserving and protecting churches and other religious buildings is crucial for their community's future life
- 87% believe that churches and religious buildings should be open to tourism when they contain architectural or artistic treasures

The results were fairly homogeneous across different countries and age groups. The Poll results resulted in favourable press comment in e.g. the International New York Times.

FRH has expressed its views in writing to Madame Vassiliou, the outgoing Commissioner of Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Sport whose valedictory publication – Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe – recognises that religious heritage forms part of the department's remit but neither recognises the sector's importance nor provides policy recommendations for its future.

FRH is now discussing with the new team under Commissioner Tibor Navracsics ways in which the Commission can develop an integrated approach to European religious heritage. FRH is also pointing out that, while some European regional money goes to churches, the distribution of central funds to religious heritage is insignificant and in no way reflects the importance of the sector.

In April 2014, FRH organised, under the sponsorship of Peter van Dalen – a Dutch MEP – an event in the EEC parliament on religious heritage. As a result of this relationship, the FRH was able to obtain a provisional line of €1million in the 2015 EEC budget in favour of Religiana (since removed in the budget committee). FRH is now looking to build relationships with selected MEPs within each of the various party groups. It is also looking to provoke a full debate on the importance of this heritage in the EU parliament.

If 2018 is declared a European Year of Cultural Heritage, FRH will aim to ensure that Religious Heritage features prominently

FRH also participated in:

- Athens March 2014: 'Heritage First, Towards a common approach for a sustainable Europe'
- Netherlands June 2014: Creation of a National Agenda for Religious Heritage
- Uppsala June 2014: 'Heaven is here' – a spectacular display of Swedish church art
- Elche July 2014: UNWTO conference on 'Religious Heritage and Tourism'
- Turin September 2014: 'Common Heritage, towards participative governance in the third millennium.'
- Uppsala October 2014: "Church as Heritage"

FRH is promoting religious heritage within European organisations such as the cultural umbrella group – Heritage Alliance 3.3.



**2 April 2014 | 10.00 - 12.00 u**

European Parliament - Room ASP 4F384

### Speakers

European overview & FRH  
Prof. dr. Thomas Coomans  
(KU Leuven/University of Leuven)

Case-study the Netherlands  
Marc de Beyer  
(Museum Catharijneconvent)  
Lilian Grootswagers  
(Task Force Toekomst Kerkgebouwen)

Case-study France  
Olivier de Rohan-Chabot  
(La Sauvegarde de l'Art Français)

Representative from the European  
Commission

**Hosted by Peter van Dalen MEP**

# what future for religious heritage in europe ?

For registration please send your full name, date of birth and nationality to: [info@frh-europe.org](mailto:info@frh-europe.org)

museum



Catharijneconvent Utrecht



European  
Conservatives  
and Reformists  
Group



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## ALTERheritage

The project aims to make existing material for vocational learning on religious heritage conservation and management available to a larger proportion of the sector in Europe. It consists of a series of seminars, hosted by the partners over a two year period, finishing in 2015. Seminars run in 2014:

### **March 2014 – Seminar in Manchester, UK**

Host: Churches Conservation Trust

The seminar focused on the Business Plan Toolkit developed by the CCT in collaboration with the Princes Regeneration Trust. The toolkit is especially developed for volunteer and community groups seeking to bring new life to heritage buildings.

### **June 2014 – Seminar in Gothenburg, Sweden**

Host: University of Gothenburg

The seminar explored the evaluation system developed in Sweden for underused buildings, to help find a sustainable purpose for them.

### **October 2014 – Seminar in Bronnbach, Germany**

Host: media k

This seminar explored the ways in which tourism can be harnessed to improve the sustainability of religious heritage buildings.

FRH is the co-ordinating partner of ALTERheritage.

The other full partners are:

- media k GmbH, Germany
- University of Leuven - Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, Belgium
- Churches Conservation Trust, UK
- Sociedad Regional de Cultura y Deporte, S. L., Spain
- Museum Catharijneconvent, the Netherlands

Silent partners:

- Centrum voor Religieuze Kunst en Cultuur vzw (CRKC) – Belgium
- ICOMOS International Training Committée
- ICCROM
- Svenska kyrkan/Church of Sweden
- Protestant church of Hessen – Nassau – Germany
- parish of Dittelsheim – Germany
- parish of Alsheim – Germany
- Monastery of the Dominicans in Worms – Germany
- Parish of the Herrgottskirche in Creglingen – Germany
- KADOC, Documentation and Research on Religious Culture and Society – Belgium
- De Monumentenwacht – the Netherlands
- The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands





## Religiana

The FRH is currently developing a multilingual smartphone, pad and PC site – Religiana - that sets out to:

Provide the general public with on-line multilingual information about:

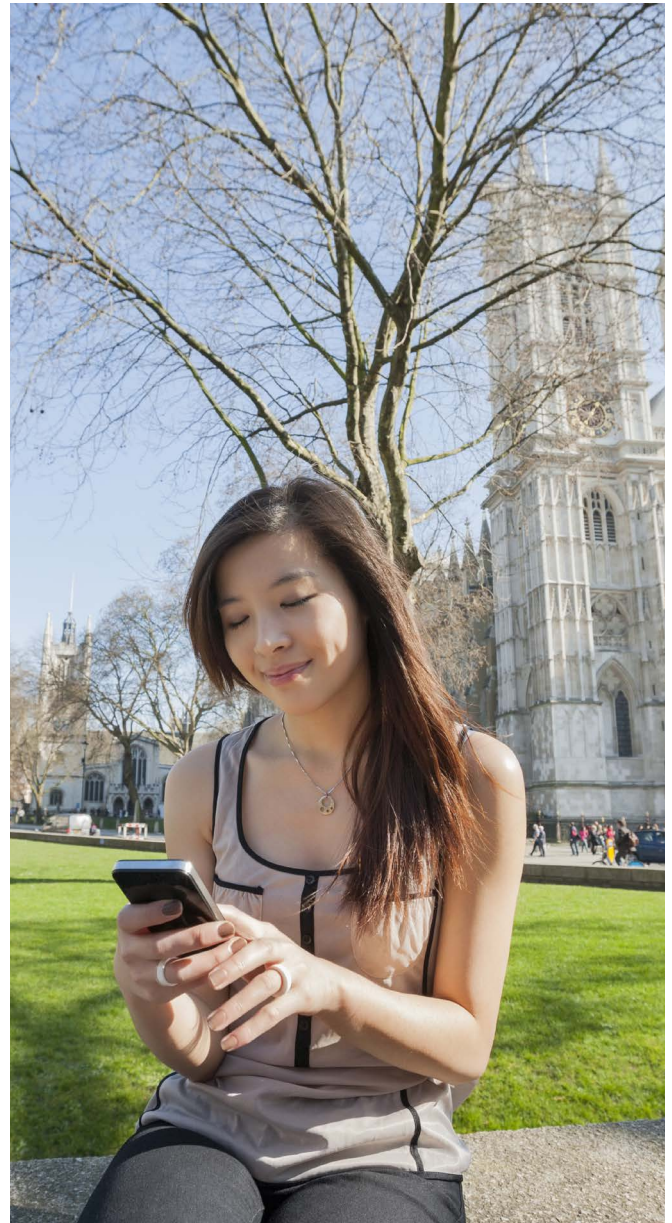
- Churches and other religious buildings – their history, architecture and contents
- Details of events and activities taking place within them
- Opening times
- Church trails and pilgrimages

Help managers of individual churches and associated NGOs to:

- Promote the interest or activities of their church or NGO
- Build virtual communities of interested individuals.
- Receive on-line donations / Manage tax credits

Develop a single source of accurate up to date information about Europe's religious heritage to:

- Permit its systematic promotion to visitors via e.g. tour operators or guidebooks.
- Provide factual evidence of the sector's economic and social value
- Religiana.mobi is currently being trialled in four countries. Its development will require substantial funding.



## FRHinformed

The FRH applied in March 2014 to the EEC under the Creative Europe programme for €200k / year for three years to make a study of the future economics of Europe's religious heritage together with an exploration of the actions that could be usefully taken at a European level to improve the situation.

The ways religious heritage is financed and run are often opaque and difficult to understand. Furthermore, under the twin pressures of declining congregations and reduced government expenditure, Europe's religious patrimony is under serious threat. The Netherlands expects to close two-thirds of its churches within the next ten years and nearly every other European country is having to come to grips with problems of redundancy. If the FRH is to make a substantive contribution to the task of transferring this patrimony intact to future generations it needs to obtain a clearer picture of the situation than one that can be obtained by simple aggregation of information obtained from its members.

Despite the high quality of the application, it was refused. Over 50 applications were received, of which 22 were successful in sectors covering museums, industrial heritage, dancing, theatre, music, festivals, jazz, stately homes, circuses, and composers.

Since a further application cannot be made until 2016, FRH is exploring a joint venture with a European business school. This would have the potential advantage of both providing resource to make the initial study and an established organisation to train future managers of religious heritage buildings.

## Europtour

The FRH has applied for a grant of €50k spread over three years under the European ERASMUS+ programme to participate with nine other charities in a study to determine to what extent an active pan-European networking can alleviate and facilitate internationally orientated marketing operations in cultural economic tourism networks. The lead partner is Kultur und Arbeit e.V. in Germany.

## Emergence and Transmission of European Cultural Heritage and Europeanisation

FRH is working with the University of Bonn and four other universities to prepare a study of the role played by religious heritage in the forging of a single European identity. Funding is being sought under the Horizon 2020 programme.





# Income and Expenditure

(euros)

	<u>2010-11</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>
General income				
Founders' donations, membership fees	17 919	12 177	14 980	16 291
Major donors	6 490	40 795	91 724	68 795
Sundry revenues		719		
	<u>24 409</u>	<u>53 691</u>	<u>106 704</u>	<u>85 086</u>
General Expense				
Salaries, soc. Sec. & sub-contract	-3 993	-17 749	-38 752	-100 593
Office rental			-4 232	-14 767
Other expenses	-7 311	-9 702	-14 397	-12 135
	<u>-11 304</u>	<u>-27 451</u>	<u>-57 382</u>	<u>-127 495</u>

\* The CCT also provided facilities to the FRH until end 2012.

Network Group meetings			-1 511	-104
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PR and Lobbying				-240
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\*\*\*The Poll was paid for by La Sauvegarde

Annual conference	Canterbury	Venice	Utrecht	Halle**
Grants received	4 720	12 304		16 625
Participants' contributions	15 889	25 848		16 394
Conference Expenditure	-23 796	-31 578	-1 483	-26 835
Balance from previous years			1 227	3 550
	<u>-3 188</u>	<u>6 574</u>	<u>-256</u>	<u>9 734</u>

\*\* The Halle conference also received €17,550 in donations in kind

General net revenues	<u><b>9 917</b></u>	<u><b>32 814</b></u>	<u><b>47 556</b></u>	<u><b>-33 019</b></u>
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Project : ALTERheritage				
EEC funding - Leonardo			12 000	
Expenses			-361	-2 383
			<u><b>11 639</b></u>	<u><b>-2 383</b></u>

Project : Religiana				
Major Donor				40 000
Expenses				-23 663
				<u><b>16 337</b></u>

Cash balances	<u>31/12/11</u>	<u>31/12/12</u>	<u>31/12/13</u>	<u>30/12/14</u>
	<b>13 105</b>	<b>45 918</b>	<b>106 661</b>	<b>87 596</b>

Once FRH's work is recognised, the EU should provide much of its project finance.

Members and major donors are essential to:

- Fund administration (to preserve FRH's independence)
- Provide seed and matching funding for projects

Current needs include

- Essential administration: €125k pa
- Religiana: €1million to fund the pilot for 2½ years



